

STAFF REPORT
Meeting Date: December 12, 2003

Agenda Item 14

TO: LAFCO Commissioners
FROM: Everett Millais, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: LAFCO Staff – Position Descriptions & Classifications

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational only with initial policy direction to staff.

DISCUSSION:

Currently, the Ventura LAFCO has 2.75 full time equivalent authorized positions; a full time Executive Officer that serves at the pleasure of the Commission and is employed via an employment contract with the County of Ventura, a three quarter time Planner IV and a full time Administrative Assistant III. Both the Planner IV and the Administrative Assistant III positions are County of Ventura staff positions, subject to the personnel policies, procedures, compensation and benefits provisions of the collective bargaining agreement between the County of Ventura and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Both the Planner and Administrative Assistant are “flexible” classifications, including levels I, II, III and IV based on experience and expertise. There are other Planner positions and Administrative Assistant positions in various County Agencies and Departments within these same classifications.

Since the adoption of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000 et seq.) LAFCOs have become truly independent agencies, rather than units of county government. The functions of LAFCO and required duties of LAFCO staff have also changed. Increasingly LAFCOs throughout the State are establishing position descriptions and classification

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representative in recognition of the specialized functions and duties required for LAFCO operations.

Staff is now working with the County Counsel and Human Resources Department about recommending to Commission that the position descriptions and classifications for the Ventura LAFCO be updated and substantially revised. The reasons and rationale for considering these changes are:

1. The Memorandum of Agreement Between LAFCO and the County of Ventura for the provision of employees, services, offices and materials provides:

“The County shall, in accordance with its Personnel Rules and Regulations, and with LAFCO’s requirements as determined by LAFCO, provide LAFCO with employees to staff its operations, including without limitation, an Executive Officer. LAFCO retains and shall exercise its sole discretion in determining the number and qualifications of its employees, the terms of employment if it chooses to employ pursuant to contract, and the selection of those individuals it elects to have hired to serve it.”

Except for the Executive Officer position and annual appropriations for employee salaries and benefits as a part of the LAFCO budget, LAFCO has not acted on the titles, qualifications or classification of its employees. This should be remedied. The Commission, as a separate agency, should set its own requirements for all its employees.

2. The position description for the Executive Officer is out of date.
3. The position descriptions for Planner IV and Administrative Assistant III do not accurately describe the functions of the jobs or the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for LAFCO functions.
4. Should a vacancy occur and recruitment be necessary, position descriptions and classifications should reflect the labor market for similar positions, especially with other LAFCOs. The attached survey information provides an indication of the array of the various titles and position classifications adopted by “urban” and near-by LAFCOs. The existing position descriptions and classifications for the Ventura LAFCO are not reflective of this labor market, especially in terms of benefits. Note that the Executive Officer position is mandated by law (Government Code §56384(a)).

Given this background, some action by the Commission about position descriptions and classifications is recommended, preferably before the start of the budget process for next fiscal year. Before proceeding further, however, this policy matter is now being presented to the Commission for information and initial direction. Position description and classification changes could have on-going fiscal impacts, affect existing employees and may cause issues with the County concerning the County’s position classifications and labor agreements.

It is requested that the Commission provide some direction to staff relating to this matter. The basic options are:

1. Maintain the status quo. While not recommended, either for existing employee retention or for filling future vacancies, this is the option that would likely be the least costly, at least in the near term.
2. Update the Executive Officer's position description and develop new position descriptions (e.g. LAFCO Analyst and Office Manager/Clerk of the Commission) and identify proper classifications for other LAFCO positions within the context of the existing agreements with the County of Ventura relating to the provision of employees by the County. Any changes under this option will require the approval of the Board of Supervisors in order to be implemented.
3. Revise agreements with the County so that, except for Legal Counsel, LAFCO employees are employed directly by LAFCO, independent of the County. LAFCO could still contract with the County for the provision of Legal Counsel and other services, offices and materials. This option, or some variation, is increasingly being used by other LAFCOs, but would likely necessitate other actions by the Commission relating to employee benefits.

Initial discussions to date with County Counsel and the County Human Resources Department have focused on option 2. This option, if changes are to occur and if feasible in the context of the County's personnel classification system and labor agreements, would probably be the most cost effective. Before proceeding further, however, the Commission's input is requested. No final action is recommended or possible at this time, but based on the Commission's initial direction further work can be done and recommendations for implementing either options 2 or 3 can be prepared for action in January or February.

Attachment:

Results of position survey of "urban" and nearby LAFCOs.

LAFCO POSITION SURVEY

Results of an informal e-mail survey of LAFCO Executive Officers in Urban Counties (as classified by CSAC), plus Kern, San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara LAFCOs – November 2003

LAFCO	No. of Authorized Positions*	Titles*	Management Benefits		Comments/Notes
			Professional staff	Clerk	
Alameda	1	Executive Officer			Did not respond to survey
Contra Costa	1	Executive Officer	Yes		All positions, except EO, are independent contractors
Fresno	3	Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer, Clerk			Did not respond to survey
Kern	3	Executive Officer, Commission Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Assistant Secretary	Yes	No	
Los Angeles	7	Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Government Relations Analyst, GIS/Mapping Technician, Executive Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Receptionist	Yes	Yes	
Orange	8	Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer, Project Manager, Policy Analyst (3), Commission Clerk, Administrative Assistant	Yes	Yes	
Riverside	5	Executive Officer, Local Government Analyst III, Local Government Analyst I (2), LAFCO Office Assistant III	Yes	Yes	All staff positions considered "confidential" for benefits
Sacramento					Did not respond to survey

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			Professional staff	Clerk	
San Bernardino	3	Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Clerk to the Commission/Office Manager	Yes	Yes	New Clerk title to include "Office Manager" is pending
San Diego	6	Executive Officer, Local Government Analyst (3), Executive Assistant, Administrative Assistant	Yes	Yes (see note)	Executive Assistant serves as Clerk and is considered "unclassified confidential"
San Francisco					New and unique LAFCO; not surveyed
San Luis Obispo	3	Executive Officer; LAFCO Analyst, Commission Clerk	Yes	Yes (see note)	Commission Clerk is classified as "confidential"
San Mateo	1	Executive Officer	Yes	NA	Executive Officer serves as Clerk
Santa Clara	3	Executive Officer, LAFCO Analyst, Board Clerk	Yes	No	
Santa Barbara					Not surveyed; all positions are independent contractors
Ventura	2.75	Executive Officer, Planner IV, Administrative Assistant III	EO only	No	

* Based on CALAFCO and survey information; does not include Legal Counsel